MSP of wheat

247. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE
be pleased to state: (a) whether it is a fact that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of wheat has been raised by Rs. 100/- per quintal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that, considering the rising cost of fertilizers, agricultural implements and labour, the MSP fixed is very low; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) the MSP of wheat for 2006-07 season has been raised to Rs. 750 per quintal which is higher by Rs. 100 per quintal than the MSP fixed for 2005-06 season.

The Government decides on the MSP after taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), (he views of State Governments and Central Ministries as well as other important factors. The CACP, while formulating its recommendation on price policy, considers the inputs provided by various State Governments as also a number of important factors which include cost of production. The cost of cultivation/production taken into account includes all paid out costs, such as those incurred on account of hired human labour, bullock labour/ machine labour (both hired and owned), cash and kind expenses on use of material inputs like seeds, fertilizers, manures, irrigation charges including cost of diesel/electricity for operation of pump sets, etc. The cost of production covers not only actual expenses incurred in cash and kind but aiso imputed value of owned assets including land and family labour.

Subsidies to farmers for increasing wheat production

248. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased
to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to offer liberal subsidies to the farmers in the country to substantially increase production of wheat during the ensuing rabi season; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) State Governments have been sensitized to the need for increasing area under wheat and enhancing

productivity by timely sowing and optimum use of inputs for making ihe country self-sufficient in production of wheat and to meet the demands for consumption in the country. For popularizing the improved package of practices amongst the farmers, 48,000 quintal quality seeds of improved varieties of wheat has been allocated to different States during 2006-07.

Setting up of National Agricultural and Technology Mission

249. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a National Agricultural and Technology Mission is being proposed to be set up to revive the farm sector;

(b) if so, the details of the mandate, power and functions of the said mission;

(c) to what extent, it would be different from the existing National Commission on Farmers; and

(d) the details of strategy to strengthen farm sector and overcome farmers' suicide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) There is no such proposal under consideration.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The Govemment has taken several initiatives in this regard. These include enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs; promoting farmer friendly, demand driven agriculture extension system; accelerating diversification to high value crops including horticulture activities; strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; optimizing the efficient utilization of available waterresoucres through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; reforming agricultural markets, and widespread Use of post harvest technology; and putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers.

The Govemment of India also recently approved a rehabilitation package for 31 suicide prone Districts in the four States of Andhra Pradesh,